

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-3, 5-9 and 12-13 are current being prosecuted. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider her rejections in view of the amendments and remarks as set forth below.

Allowable Subject Matter

It is gratefully acknowledged that the Examiner considers the subject matter of claims 1-3 as being allowable.

Telephone Interview

Applicants note with appreciation the call from Examiner Stephens on April 27, 2004. The Examiner indicated that claims 1-3 would be allowable but that the remaining claims would not be allowable in their current form. The conversation did not result in an Examiner's Amendment to obtain the allowance of the application. It was agreed that the Examiner should submit an Advisory Action to provide Applicant with more time to consider the situation.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 5-9, 12 and 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Paul (U.S. Patent No. 6,217,890) in view of

Hamajima et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,865,822). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

By way of the present amendment, Applicants have added a limitation to claims 5, 12 and 13 relating to the water absorption value of the superabsorbent polymer. In view of the discussion with the Examiner, Applicants believe that the addition of this limitation to independent claims 5, 12 and 13 will also make these claims allowable. Accordingly, Applicants submit that this rejection should now be overcome. Claims 6-9 depend from claim 5 and are likewise considered to be allowable.

Conclusion

In view of the above remarks, it is believed that the claims clearly distinguish over the patents relied on by the Examiner, either alone or in combination. In view of this, reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of all the claims are respectfully requested.

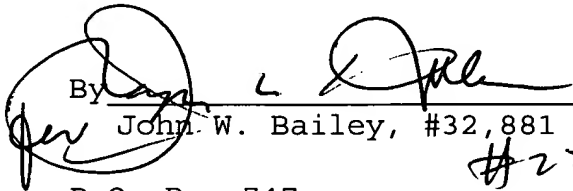
Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicant(s) respectfully petition(s) for a two (2) month extension of time for filing a reply in connection with the present application, and the required fee of \$420.00 is attached hereto.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Robert F. Gnuse (Reg. No. 27,295) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.


Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment(s)